
HEALING

Body & Soul

Your Guide to Holistic Wellbeing
Following Islamic Teachings

Amira Ayad

Revised and Edited by
Jamila Hakam

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Introduction

When I began studying alternative therapy and holistic wellbeing, I read about the centuries-old Indian, Chinese and Japanese traditional practices of herbal and therapeutic medicine. It made me wonder, why are we following practices derived from polytheistic belief systems? Do we have no Islamic alternative? WHY? Did not our dear Prophet — (ﷺ) (Blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) — say: «I left among you what if you hold on to, you will never go astray, the book of Allah and my Sunnah (life practice).»¹

This does not apply only to acts of worship (*'ibâdât*), for Islam covers all aspects of life. The wellbeing of the whole person — emotionally, physically, spiritually and mentally — is necessary for the believer to participate fully in life, fulfilling his or her duty towards Allah and towards society.

A brief history of Western medicine

Since the beginning of recorded history, Western medical practitioners have adopted one or the other of two opposing paths: 'rationalism' (acquiring



¹ Ibn Mâjah, Abu Dâwood, Aḥmed and Mâlik in his *Muwatṭâ'* (graded as sound by Albâni).

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bones, muscles, joints, and tendons, as well as the different functional systems: the cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal and immune systems and others. The key to a balanced, healthy physical body is to live an active and virtuous life conforming to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and peace be upon him) said: «The strong believer is more loved by Allah than the weak one, and there is benefaction in both.»¹ This hadith demonstrates the importance of taking good care of your body, keeping it fit, healthy and strong, as a strong body holds the potential for a powerful soul, a sound personality and a wise intellect.

Islam teaches us many ways to protect, empower and preserve our bodies, both through prophylactic (preventative) measures that include abstinence from vice, and by referring to physicians and seeking medical advice when needed. Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «There is a cure for every disease, and if a medication overcomes a disease, then (the patient) is cured by the will of Allah Almighty.»² He (ﷺ) also said: «Ask Allah for forgiveness and health, for after faith nothing is better than health.»³ However, Dhahabi wrote that it is forbidden to use any non-permitted medication for our treatment, saying that healing will only be attained if one is treated by *halâl* (legitimate, permitted in Islam) means.⁴

Before discussing the effects of Islamic teachings on different body systems, we should note two important rules in Islam meant to ensure a healthy physical body:

¹ Muslim.

² Ibid.

³ Tirmidhi, Nasâ'i and Ibn Mâjah (a sound hadith).

⁴ Abu Nâ'eem Dhahabi, *Prophetic Medicine*.

The first rule is 'No harm'

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: «No harm and no reciprocating harm.»⁵

Allah (ﷻ) says in the Qur'an:

﴿... وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ ...﴾ (١٥٧)

(سورة الأعراف: ١٥٧)

«... He allows for them as lawful *tayyibât* [all good things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.], and prohibits for them as unlawful *khabâ'ith* [all evil and unlawful things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.].»
(Qur'an 7: 157)

Smoking and tobacco use

Smoking tobacco is without doubt a highly harmful habit. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of people smoking tobacco has decreased in the developed Western world while the habit is prevailing in developing countries. Smoking causes 90% of the cases of lung cancers and 85% of the other pulmonary diseases such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma, in addition to 35% of the cases of heart attacks and embolism (blockage) of the coronary arteries. Smoking is also associated with cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, stomach,



⁵ Ibn Mâjah and Imams Mâlik and Aḥmed (Albâni graded it as 'good').